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ART IN DRESS

SHOES AND PATTENS.

III.



HAVING completed our references to the shoes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we come now to those of the eighteenth. Our first example (Fig. 24) is a woman's shoe of the time of the Regency made of polished leather. The extremity to which the fashion of high heels may be carried is well shown in this example. We have here, on a shoe with no decoration except a small buckle on the instep, a heel so immoderately high as to make the position of the sole almost vertical. The fashions in shoes in the time of Louis XV. varied greatly. Heels were more or less high, toes were more or less pointed, and the variety of decoration was almost infinite. Of the examples in the Jacquemart collection (Figs. 25 and 26) one is of green cloth embroidered with silver, another is of white kid, embroidered with flowers and ornaments in silver and colored silks. Still another (Fig. 27) is a dainty wooden sabot, gilded and painted with roses and green leaves on a white ground. The shoes and coquettish slippers (Fig. 28) of the time of Louis XVI. were noticeable for the delicacy of the stuffs and the predominance of white, rose, lilac, and other tender colors. Under the Directory some very fine shoes were worn by fashionable "exquisites"; the example shown (Fig. 29) is of rose kid embroidered on the front with ornaments from the antique. The absurd affectation of Greek classical costume in France under the First Empire was inimical at least to the pernicious fashion of high heels. Ridiculous ribanded pumps took the place of the genuine sandals of the ancients. The Empire style of costume did not last long, however, and when at last the reaction came, the high heel, which, as we have seen, with some intermissions, held its own through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, again asserted itself, and to-day is seen as firmly entrenched as it has ever been. Neither its condemnation on the score of taste, by professors of art, nor the warning of its bad effects on the system by the medical man apparently can do aught to dislodge it.

Mr. Frederick Treves, an English surgeon of eminence, in a lecture on "Woman's Dress" referred to in these columns last June, while forcibly objecting to the modern shoe with high heels for physiological reasons, pointed out how it affected the carriage of women of the present day. A French shoe with high heels midway in the sole, he compared with the moccasin of a North American Indian, and the gait resulting from the use of each was described. A stroll down Fifth Avenue of a bright Sunday afternoon will point so eloquent a moral that we need no lecturer to elaborate the subject. Anything more ungainly than the walk of half our American women can hardly be imagined. What with their high-heeled boots, gowns so tight around the knees that a mud-puddle and an omnibus-step are viewed with equal trepidation, and in winter the hands imprisoned in a muff, the wearer is as helpless as a doll in a shop-window, and as easily thrown off her balance.

The modern French heel in the middle of the foot reminds one of the old-fashioned Venetian patten, and while certainly it is not so cumbersome it is not nearly so serviceable; for on a muddy day it affords no protection for the lower part of the foot. All pattens are not ugly. In our last number we showed some preserved in the Jacquemart collection; that made in the form of the decorated shoes worn, the time effectually preserved the decorated boots of the time from injury.

Mrs. Haweis, an English writer on "Beauty and Dress," mourns the departed days of "the old Italian pattens, tall, slender, light, formed of costly wood, or inlaid with delicate mother-o'-pearl or ivory," which "prove that even a clog can be idealized and made a becoming as well as a useful protection." The lady becomes almost pathetic on the subject, and exclaims: "Little feet were not concealed then, nor soiled with wet, when roads were heavy with mud; they were lightly lifted above it; indeed, a world of chivalrous thought and appreciation divides the two periods.



FIG. 24. WOMAN'S LEATHER SHOE OF THE TIME OF THE REGENCY.





FIGS. 25 AND 26. LOUIS XV. SHOES.

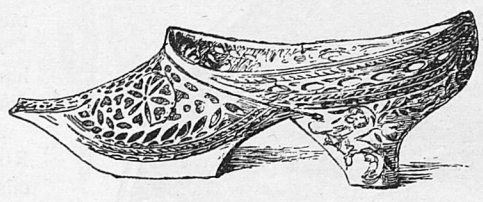


FIG. 27. PAINTED AND GILDED LOUIS XV. SABOT.



FIG. 28. LOUIS XVI. SLIPPER.



FIG. 29. DIRECTORY SHOE.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SHOES.

IN THE JULES JACQUEMART COLLECTION.

Then, glittering props like the wings of Mercury upheld the dainty passenger; *now*, her feet and her petticoat-tails may be drenched with mire; *then* it was a delight to see the fairy slippers unharmed, though the street might be a torrent of mud; *now* they must not only descend into the depths, but, in addition, be swelled to unnatural proportions by the hideous golosh and be ugly as well as dirty. Oh, will not some fair lady who has pretty feet make a pilgrimage through the park in a neat little pair of pattens, and teach her timid sisters how to avoid the annual ordeal of mire?" The writer is practical; for she suggests two forms, one for unheeled and the other for heeled boots. The first sample is attached by straps, and the other is curved to fit the heel, to which it is fastened by a screw and an almost invisible perforation through the heel. The attachments are very similar in appearance to those of skates—the old-fashioned skate with the straps and the new kind without.

Such a patten as Mrs. Haweis suggests is an improvement on the principle shown in Fig. 30, but it is naturally much neater; for our illustration it must be borne in mind shows the support that was necessary for the extravagantly long fifteenth century pointed shoe, portrayed in our last number. The wooden patten with iron-shod supports is held to the foot by a strap of embroidered leather, raising the shoe from the ground and keeping the unwieldy point in position on a stiff prolongation also ironed to the end. Of the reign of Francis I. we have a Cordovan patten with gilt embellishments open-worked and displaying pale green leather underneath. Whether it was worn by a man or a woman is not known. Opinion seems to be divided as to whether women only wore pattens at this time, or whether they were worn by both sexes.

The Venetian patten with a broad base like a cow's foot shown in Fig. 32 is especially curious from the fact that its white skin indicates that it was worn by a courtesan; the sumptuary laws in Italy were strict, and only women of irreproachable character were permitted to wear black pattens. Such a patten as this is seen in a picture by Paul Veronese, painted in 1570, representing the entertainment of Jesus by Simon, the Pharisee. The other Venetian example (Fig. 33) is of leather embossed and slashed, and, unlike the first, is closed at the point.

We do not think we can do better than conclude our observations on women's shoes with some remarks on the subject by the eminent French critic, the late Charles Blanc. The leniency he shows to the characteristic high heels of the Parisian women is a curious illustration of the power of fashion to force even an intelligent and judicious writer to find excuses for a most inartistic practice. M. Blanc says:

"However long may be a lady's skirt or train, there are times when it permits the foot to be seen, and at such moments all the charm of her toilet would be lost were she not daintily and gracefully shod. Ladies of fashion too often wish to have, like the Chinese women, an almost imperceptible foot, to convey the idea without doubt that it is impossible for them to walk and that they were born to ride in carriages. In spite of any such vanity, however, nature does not intend the human body to rest upon a base incapable of carrying it. According to the measurements of Albert Dürer, the proportion of a woman's foot to her stature is as 14 to 100—that is, the proper length of the female foot is about the seventh part of the height of the body. Below this proportion the foot would lack grace. Considering, however, the taste of women for small feet (this taste has come to them from the idea that common natures have large and heavy extremities), it is proper to incline the foot a little toward the ground should one desire it to appear smaller and at the same time the figure to appear taller. As a dancer who walks upon tip-toe gives herself a momentary grace in suppressing, so to speak, her foot, in the same manner a lady shortens hers by raising it upon heels, in order that the sole of the foot may form with the leg a very obtuse angle instead of a right angle. Another mode of diminishing the natural importance of the foot and of lending to it a cunning look, is to place upon it a voluminous ornament, for example, a large rosette of lace or satin; these gave their coquettishness to the Louis XIII. and Louis XV. shoes. But high heels, if they have the advantage of accentuating the arch of the in-

step, have also the inconvenience, if they be a little exaggerated, of altering a woman's walk, and compelling her to beat the time of her steps, like a foot soldier in line.

"Women have the art of pleasing us in leather shoes as well as in satin ones. They understand how to give an indefinable and roguish grace to hunting boots slashed with shagreen, laced on the top, and with thick soles which serve as an excellent pretext for mountain excursions. Such trips authorize ladies to wear even the wooden shoe, which conquers the dews and the mud and forms a striking contrast to the delicacy of their feet. In the city, they put on the polished goat skin, or better yet the deerskin shoe, which fits them like a glove, and which, for dress occasions, is changed to the low shoe, with a bow and a Louis XV. heel. An observation which it is undoubtedly superfluous to make to them is, that evening shoes must match the toilette, just as the slippers must match the morning gown. The most elegant ladies retain from the silk of their dresses a small piece which they send to the shoemaker for their ball shoes. This law holds good for all kinds of foot covering. The cloth shoe should be of the same tint as the skirt, and if the dress be of two colors the shoes, when made of the dress material, must recall the predominating shade, so as not to be too conspicuous, or else it may be the color of the trimming in order to accentuate the harmony. Some shoes are suited to all costumes, as are those of polished goat skin or gold color. There are others which must strictly match. A black shoe with a gray silk dress would offend the eye and be too pronounced. A corn-colored shoe relieved with a blue poult-de-soie bow would be perfectly in harmony with a very tasteful toilet of these two shades combined. Likewise, a shoe of brown material would be suitable for a gray and brown costume. Sometimes the matching may be done with the lace, or with white lace similar to the flounces of the dress or to the trimmings of the waist."

HINTS UPON COSTUME.

THE following very sensible observations are selected from Miss Oakey's excellent little book. "Beauty in Dress" (HarperBros.):

A short woman thinks she looks taller for wearing a very long waist. So she does in her short mirror; but she forgets that what she adds above she cuts off below, and, did she look in a long glass, she would see that, by apparently shortening the legs, she loses far more height than she gains. The shorter the woman the shorter should be her waist, and the longer her legs to give her height.

Any woman is too tightly dressed who cannot raise her arms straight up above her head and clasp her hands; who cannot stoop to tie her shoe, or pick up a pin, without heightened color.

A woman should be wider at the broadest part of her hips than at her shoulders; therefore, all ornament which alters these proportions is unfeminine and ugly —ruffles at the shoulders that extend beyond them, puffs on the sleeves that broaden the shoulders. The waist coming very near the legs is a masculine trait, and women, by lengthening the waist, make two mistakes: they give an unfeminine size to the body, and apparently shorten the legs, and nothing gives a greater elegance to a figure than a sufficiently long leg.

Sometimes a strong face is brutalized by bringing the hair low, and spiritualized by wearing it high; for often with a strong face the modelling of the forehead is an important and fine feature.

The throat is apparently shortened by any hair or ornament hanging from the head, and only where the throat is long should any such fashion be indulged. The throat is shortened by standing ruffles, and the shoulders heightened by a "square-cut dress."

The geometric style of dress, that is, cut up into triangles and stiff forms, is trying for any kind of figure, good or bad. Where the figure is handsome, the nearer to the simplicity of a bit of fabric draped about it in soft, clinging lines the dress approaches, the more becoming.

Long lines from the shoulder to the foot give height; horizontal lines crossing the figure shorten the person. Short, stout women should avoid basques, or any dress that makes a descriptive line about the hips; ruffles at the shoulder or hips that increase the bulk; waists or skirts of too great tightness, where looser draperies would give slenderness to the figure from not defining too clearly the lines.

Tall women who are too slender may use the horizontal lines with advantage, and increase the apparent size of arm or waist by a surrounding band. The double skirt is to them an advantage, where it makes the shorter woman look too short.

A massing of color, and a gentle passing from one tone to another, is always more pleasing than violent contrasts, which, if used, should be in one place, as in a bow judiciously placed, or a flower or a lining.

White muslin or lace about the neck casts reflected lights on the face, thus clearing the complexion, and lighting up the little modellings of the face. Where the type is finer than the modelling, a dress that eats up

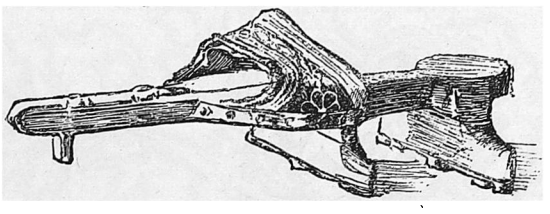


FIG. 30. POINTED PATTEN.

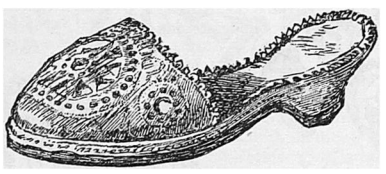


FIG. 31. CORDOVAN PATTEN.

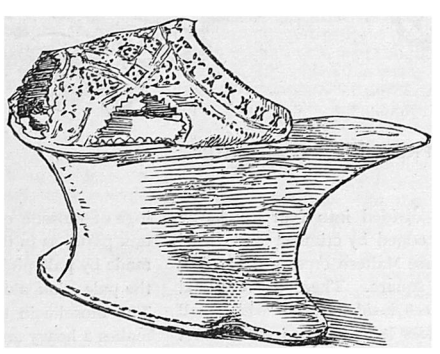


FIG. 32. VENETIAN PATTEN.

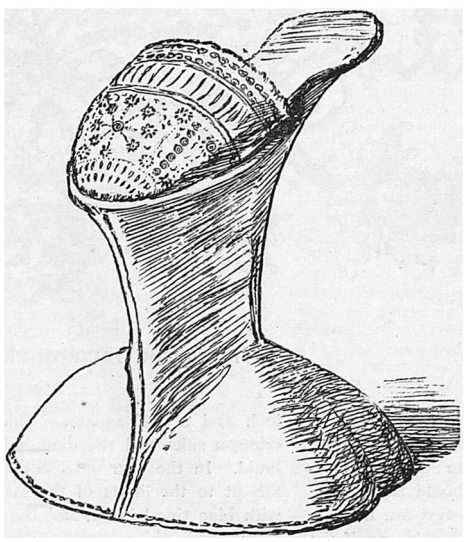


FIG. 33. HIGH VENETIAN PATTEN.

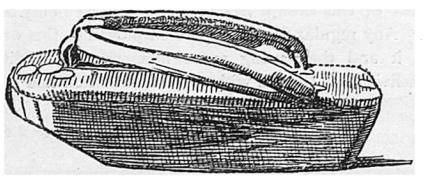


FIG. 34. JAPANESE PATTEN.

EUROPEAN AND ORIENTAL PATTENS.

IN THE JULES JACQUEMART COLLECTION.

the light, like dark velvet, will be the most effective setting.

People appear more slender in black and dark colors, and stouter in light colors; slenderer in such stuffs as form masses of shadow, with a few flashing lights, as velvet, for instance; and stouter in stuffs that reflect light and have fewer shadows, like cloth, satin, silk.

No young girl looks as young or as lovely in heavy velvets and loaded trimmings as in simple muslins, and soft, clinging materials. She detracts from her own fresh charms by calling attention to her adornment.

Trimming should be entirely consequent upon the structure of the dress. The button that buttons nothing, or appears to button nothing, the bow that ties or fastens nothing, is an absurdity; yet one sees much trimming that is of this kind. Nothing is more elegant than simplicity, nor in worse taste than over-elaboration.

A little pale woman in flashing diamonds is absurd; the silent pearl, the dull, soft turquoise, the evasive, mysterious opal, even the little inexpensive moonstone the green chalcedony, the topaz, the amethyst—especially with a velvet surface or finish (what the French call "défacée"); even amber, or pale tea-colored coral —all these, as ornaments, are becoming to ninety-nine women, where the diamond is becoming to the one hundredth.

That a woman with delicate personal charms should utterly extinguish them by the brilliancy of her dress, seems like the blind taste of a savage. For most women a single jewel, if it is handsome, which shall be the key-note of color of the dress, is more effective than necklace and bracelets and rings.

COLOR IN DRESS.

LADIES may trim their costumes with brignt and positive colors; but there should be a decided restriction as to the application of such as are gaudy. It is very difficult to describe what a gaudy color is; yet, since it is incumbent upon one to attempt some kind of definition, it may be said that that is a gaudy color which kills the complexion. Red is the brightest and most positive color we have, even as white is the least so. Still, red is not necessarily a gaudy color. If, however, it be mixed with yellow, it becomes gaudy —that is, trying to the complexion, and otherwise overpowering. And the greater the quantity of yellow the more gaudy it is, until we come from scarlet to yellow-orange. On the other hand, the more blue we add to pure red the more sombre the hue, until we arrive at violet, the very antithesis of yellow orange. Now, before reaching violet we pass in gradation through purple. This is by no means a bright color; nevertheless it is gaudy, inasmuch as it kills; whereas violet itself, or blue-purple—that is to say, true violet, produced from the best pigments —does not.

A great many tints likewise kill, and should not be introduced except with the greatest discrimination; pink, light blue, light green, and so forth being becoming exclusively to very fair people; and light yellow suiting only brunettes. Mediæval tints, however, may be worn with advantage by all; although care should be taken to prevent any tint, of whatsoever description, from being juxtaposed in immediate proximity with the complexion. They ought invariably to be separated by bands or frillings of black or white.

It has become fashionable of late to wear black next the skin, and there can be no doubt that theoretically —according to the law of contrast—the practice is justifiable. It is suitable, however, only to very fair complexions. Otherwise, so far from enhancing beauty, it creates an appearance of uncleanliness. As to the introduction of black patches upon the countenance, no argument is needed against the folly of resorting to any such meretricious device.

White itself cannot be recommended, excepting in very partial combination with other colors. What has been said about its "irradiating all that comes within its range" is simple nonsense. Used in masses it takes the color out of everything; as we may notice when the ground is covered with snow. The most delicate complexions then suffer by contrast. If very light, cool-looking dresses be desired—and such things are often desirable—let them be of cream, or écru. Not only may positive colors be introduced with advantage into bands and trimmings, but they may be introduced in two shades or hues. A creamy-white "fish-wife" costume, for example, furnished with broad bands of dark blue, may further have these set off with narrow ones of light blue. And in this manner, even such colors as, when used in quantities, kill, may suggest themselves with effect. A winter dress of navy blue, adorned with bands of crimson, may have these tricked out with borders or pipings of scarlet. Lilac may appear upon, or otherwise be used in juxtaposition with, violet; yellow upon citrine; salmon upon framboise, and so on; for a mere soupçon of color cannot have the same detrimental effect as its presence in masses.